EVOLUTION FROM SLAVERY TO SELF-MADE HUMAN: A STUDY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND INDIAN DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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A)Introduction:

The study offers to examine the autobiographies *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou from African-American literature, *The Outcaste* by Sharankumar Limbale and *The Weave of My Life* by Urmila Pawar from Indian Dalit literature from the social evolution perspective. The principal objective of the present study is to apply Charles Darwin's Human Evolution Theory to the selected autobiographies to unveil the social evolution process of African-American and Dalit community. Charles Darwin has proposed a human evolution theory; he stated human evolution stages and explicated how the human beings have been evolved from animal to social animal over a period of time. Similarly, present study attempts to propose the social evolution theory and try to explain the social evolution stages of African-American and Indian Dalit community.

Indian Dalits and African- American community share equal social discrimination. The Indian Dalits have been discriminated by the caste and African-American faces racial discrimination in their society. Both the communities have been undergone the severe discrimination and pass through the social evolution stages. Throughout the present study the theory of human evolution will be applied to the selected autobiographies to bring out the social evolution process of the underprivileged communities from their slavery to self-made human.

The theory of evolution tells about the stages of human evolution. It depicts how man has evolved from the animal to a human being. Similarly, the present study attempts to explicate that how Dalits and African-Americans have gone through the process of social evolution and passes through the several social evolution stages to be a self-esteem human being in society.

The present study tries to trace the social evolution of African-American and Dalits by proposing the following stages.

The Social evolution stages of African-American and Indian Dalits:

a) Animal status

b) Caliban - half - beast - barbarian

c) Slave

d) Awareness of one's own situation

e) Struggle to shake off slavery

f) Education, economics, independence and social interaction.

g) Civilized status of prestige and dignity

i) Self-esteem

j) Socially Respected

k) Voice of Community

l) Medium of Social empowerment

m) Globally recognized

Each autobiography will be examined and analyzed on these lines in which the evolution from slavery to freedom will be presented. Throughout the present research an attempt will be made to explain that the social evolution journey of African-American people is as equal to the human evolution theory.

The selected writers from Dalit and African-American communities share the similarities and differences in respect of the atrocities infected on the underprivileged, socially segregated communities. They have rendered their personal experiences in the selected texts which unveil the discrimination on the basis of caste and race. The present study is to examine the selected autobiographies from social evolution perspective by applying Charles Darwin's Human Evolution theory.

The genre autobiography is considered as a reflection of the life of a person or person's surroundings. Similarly, the autobiographies from African-American literature and Dalit have reflected the life of underprivileged people. Oppression, sufferings, humiliation and discrimination of weaker sections of the society remains as crucial themes of the selected autobiographies. African-American autobiographies, *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou have several real life incidents which highly relate the topic. Both the authors have recounted their lives which have many examples of social evolution. They were born and brought up in severe poverty and struggled hard to being

respected human beings in their respective societies. Life of Booker T. Washington was such tough due to his race and colour in America. He faced the racial discrimination in his entire life. His life is itself a motivation for him in which he has struggled from animal like life to respected citizen of USA. He not only speaks about his life but also portrayed the social reality in his autobiography. He captured the African-American life and portrayed it from social evolution point of view. Similarly, life of Maya Angelou represents the life of African-American woman. She has gone through the severe double discrimination due to her gender and race. She has written a collection of autobiography but her *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* depicts her life which explores her journey of social evolution from slavery to self-made human. She shares numerous real life incidents which relate the topic as a social evolution of the African-American woman.

The other selected autobiographies from Dalit literature are *The Outcaste* by Sharankumar Limbale and *The Weave of My Life* by Urmila Pawar. These autobiographies have represented Dalit lives aptly. Along with the lives of author, the socio-reality of Dalits and Dalit women have been explored from the social evolution point of view. Both the authors have narrated their sufferings due to their caste and lower social status. Limbale in his autobiography explicated the life of Dalit men and women who severely humiliated due to their lower caste by the caste dominant people. They lived animal-like life in their early days. Their childhood and schooling made them to face caste differences by their society. They have been treated differently and considered untouchables in the school by the teacher and schoolmates. Both the authors have captured Dalit life from animal status to the respected humans in the society. Their own lives itself are the example of social evolution from animal like life to self-made human in the society. Therefore, these select autobiographies from African-American and Dalit literature has been chosen to explore the lives of marginalized communities from African-American and Dalit society.

B) Research Problem:

The African-American and Dalit literature have been studied by numerous scholars from various points of view. But present study attempts to focus the least ignored point of view. The African-American and Dalit literature have not been studied from social evolution perspective. The

present research is an attempt of applying the scientific theory to the autobiographies of African-American literature and studies from social evolution of African-American and Dalit society. The selected autobiographies have not been studied earlier by applying the scientific theory; hence an attempt is made to study the selected autobiographies from social evolution perspective.

C) Aims and Objectives of the Study:

1. To bring out the relation between African-American and Indian Dalit Autobiographies.
2. To unveil socio-cultural dimensions of both communities with the help of selected autobiographies.
3. To apply the Human Evolution Theory of Charles Darwin to the Indian Dalits and African-Americans to bring out their social evolution process.
4. To make out the similarities between the journey of human evolution and the journey of Dalits and African-Americans from Slavery to Self-made human.
5. To highlight the evolutionary journey of Indian Dalits from Slavery to Self-made human.
6. To highlight the evolutionary journey of African-Americans from Slavery to Self-made human.
7. To trace the evolutionary journey of African-American women from Slavery to Self-made human.
8. To trace the evolutionary journey of Indian Dalit women from Slavery to Self-made human.
9. To explicate the struggle of African-Americans and Indian Dalits from Slavery to Self-made human.
10. To trace the human journey from the animal stage to a social animal.

D) Hypotheses:

1. There is an innate relationship between African-American and Indian Dalit autobiographies.

2. Stages of human evolution are equal to the journey of Dalits and African-Americans from slavery to Self-made human.

3. Application of human evolution theory helps to present Dalits and African-American's journey from slavery to Self-made human.

4. African-American and Indian Dalit autobiographies are similar at thematic level.

5. Both the communities have struggled a lot to achieve the Dignity and Self –Identity in the society.

6. African-American and Indian Dalit people have gone through the social evolution stages to achieve self-esteem and identity in the society.

7. Dalit and African-American woman have socially evolved from slavery to Self-made human in the society.

E) Data, Scope and Limitations

It has a wide scope to conduct the research in African-American literature and Indian Dalit literature. The present research is an attempt to apply the human evolution theory of Charles Darwin to the select autobiographies. Many researchers have done their research on African-American literature and Indian Dalit literature with various perspectives but the application of the scientific theory to the literature remains a neglected area of research. In the selected autobiographies, there are several things which provide a vast potential to relate the topic.

The present research is limited to the four selected autobiographies only. Although the selected autobiographies are embedded in good structure, these need to be explored from the point of view of the social ethos and socio-cultural reality of these communities. The principal objective

of the present research is to apply the human evolution theory to the journey of African-Americans and Indian Dalits from slavery to self-made human.

The present study is limited to the following autobiographies:

1. From Indian Dalit literature:

A) Limbale, Sharankumar. *The Outcaste* (Akkaramash) Tr. Santosh Bhoomkar. Oxford University Press, New Delhi: 2003. Print.

B) Pawar, Urmila. *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Women's Memoirs*. Tr. Maya Pandit. Bhatkal & Sen, Kolkata. 2018. Print.

2. From African-American literature:

A) Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York. 1996.

B) Angelou, Maya. *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings*. United Kingdom, Bantam Books, 1993. Print.

F) Review of Literature

1. Aston, N. M. (2001)

His book *Dalit Literature and African-American Literature* is a collection of research articles by the eminent scholars. It provides a vast potential to understand the form of Dalit and African-American literature. It offers a comparative study of two marginal literatures. The concept of marginal literature has been well clarified in the book by the contributors. This supports to the present study to understand the marginal literature.

2. Kapoor, S. D. (2004)

Dalit and African-Americans: A Study in Comparison, comprises the agonizing history of the downtrodden community. Kapoor has pointed out the pathetic history of Dalits and African–American society who faces social inequalities. The book is incorporated a comparative study of Dalits and African-American society. It also enlightens the journey of both communities from slavery to freedom. The book is helpful for the present research to understand the underprivileged surroundings of both the communities. It also supports to the present research to conduct a comparative study of both the communities.

3. Waghmare, Janardhan. (2001)

Waghmare, in his book *A Quest for Black Identity* portrayed a wretched journey of black Americans to get an identity. An identity issues is one of the revolts against the mainstream power. Waghmare has inculcated the identity issue of African-American people by studying Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin's literary works. The book is a well commentary on the post war life of African-American people. The book foregrounds the present study to analyze the African-American life in more minute way.

4. Roy, Mantra. (2010)

In her doctoral thesis entitled, *Speaking Subalterns: A Comparative Study of African-American and Dalit/Indian Literature*, mentioned that these both the communities can be considered as subalterns in their respective countries and they need to be given a voice. Her research on these two marginalized communities gives more room to study the Dalits and African-American communities comparatively. Mantra's Doctoral thesis will be supported to the present study to critically examine the Dalit and Black American life.

5. Kumar, Raj. (2019)

This book entitled, *Dalit Literature and Criticism (Literary/Cultural Theory)* deals with a critical literary history and theory of Dalit literature. It helps to understand the concepts related to Dalit literature. Author's countless efforts to depict the Dalit literature in this book, helps to answer the questions like who is a Dalit? What is the history and context of Dalit self-expression? What is the philosophy of Dalit literature? What is Dalit aesthetics? For the present research this book will be highly helpful to establish the background of Dalit literature.

6. W.E.B, Du Bois. (1915)

In his book *The Nigro and the social evolution of the Black South: Illustrated Black History Collection*, Du Bois traced the history of the African race. History of Slave trade and the history of black community across the globe have been well explicated by the Du Bois in this book. The book is very much helpful to understand the transitional history of the black African-American society. His article on social evolution of black will be a crucial document for the present study.

7. Miller, D. Quentin (2016):

The book titled *The Routledge Introduction to African American Literature*offers a deep comprehension of origin of African American literature. This book incorporated the concrete background of African American literature. It is one of the recent updated books on African American literature. It offers to a detail understanding of the concepts like Contemporary African American Writing, Slave Narratives, Harlem Renaissance, black Literature and Vernacular, Oral, and Blues Traditions in Literature. This book will be highly important to present the background of the African-American literature.

8. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. (2001):

*The Origins of African American Literature*by Dickson D. Bruce sheds a light on the works of Phillis Wheatley's Poetry, Frederick Douglass's Narrative, Harriet Jacobs' Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl and Martin Delany's Blake. This book has depicted the black lives and their struggle for freedom. It helps to understand the state of mind of the black people who suffered from the racial discrimination.

9. Dangle Arjun (1992):

Dangle's *Poisoned Bread* is the first anthology of Dalit literature which incorporates the crucial collections of Dalit literature. Around the eighty various topics have been included in this anthology by the eminent Dalit writers. This anthology is considered as the foundation of the Dalit literature. This book provides a concrete understanding of the Dalit literature and its unique form.

10. Mukherjee, Alok, and Limbale, Saranakumar (2004):

Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies, and Considerations, is Sharankumar Limable's first critical work. Limbale counters the criticism on Dalit literature by saying non-Dalit cannot imagine the sufferings and agonies which Dalits have faced in their lives from hundreds of years. Further, Limbale says the Dalit literature has its ownaesthetics therefore it looks unique form in comparison to the other literatures. This book is great help to understand the form of Dalit literature and Dalit lives.

The present study will attempt to refer numerous books, research articles, critical books and journals to support and relate the present research. There are few more books can be analyzed to reach to the proper findings for the present study.

G) Methodology and Techniques

The present research is an analytical in nature. Therefore, an attempt will be made to make the comparative analysis of selected autobiographies to reach to a proper interpretation. The researcher will collect all the data regarding present research by reading various books and by visiting various libraries. The prime data collection will be held from the selected autobiographies by close analysis of African-American and Indian Dalit autobiographies. He will also seek the help of the internet, research papers, articles published in national and international journals and critical books. Web sources will be used as per necessity. The MLA method will be strictly followed for the citations.

H) Justification of Research

Indian Dalit literature and African-American literature have been studied at the research level from the various literary perspectives. However, there is no tangible research work on the application of scientific theory to literature especially to the autobiographies of Indian Dalit and African-American writers. Some research scholars have done the research on some other aspects of these branches of literature but not on this distinct aspect of applying Charles Darwin's evolution theory to the autobiographies of the two individual communities belonging to the marginalized groups of the society moving from slavery to self-made human.

The present research is an attempt to study the selected autobiographies from African-American and Indian Dalits. Since this is a research-oriented study, some autobiographies need to be selected for the purpose of studying, examining and evaluating the social conditions of the black African-American in USA and Dalits in India.

The writing of African-American writers and Indian Dalit writers is simple and unpretentious. They have rendered their experiences through their writings. Unlike the other writers the selected writers were able to write about their own society in details. There is of course some difference between these writers and their autobiographies but they all are very conscious to portray an apt picture of the society.

I) Pedagogical Implications

The Pedagogical Implication of the study will be,

1. The study is that the teachers will find out pedagogic techniques and theories of education to relate to both the theories ofsciences and arts and crafts.
2. The scientific theories like Darwin's theory of Evolution, Marxist theory, Freudian theory, Newtonian theory and others will be applied to works of literature and studies of other arts and social sciences.
3. Teachers will find out new innovative strategies of teaching autobiographies as the life stories of the persons who have moved from slavery and indignity to liberation, dignity, prestige and honour.
4. Teachers will teach the genre autobiography as a social reflection.

J) Tentative Chapter Scheme

1. Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter of the present research provides anintroduction of the present study. It will state the aims and objectives, rationale and significance of the study including scope and limitations

and the research methodology for the present research. It also gives a brief account on Human Evolution Theory by Charles Darwin. This chapter enables everybody to understand the social evolution of African-American and Dalits. The chapter takes detail account of the select autobiographies to reach to the proper findings. This chapter also provides appropriate background of the autobiographies which shows the sufferings and discrimination of the African-American and Dalit people. African-American autobiographies, *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou have several real life incidents which depicts the pathetic life of the African-American people. Similarly, the autobiographies *The Outcaste* by Sharankumar Limbale and *The Weave of My Life* by Urmila Pawar display the sufferings of the Dalit people. These autobiographies have represented Dalit lives apt to the socio-reality. Along with the lives of author, the socio-reality of Dalits and Dalit women will be explored from the social evolution point of view. At the end of this chapter an attempt will be made to study the background of African-American and Dalit society thoroughly.

2. Chapter II: Theory of Human Evolution and Social Evolution

This chapter will be devoted to the scientific Human Evolution Theory by Charles Darwin. It will throw light on the human journey from barbarism to civilization. The scientific stages of human evolution will be discussed in this chapter. An attempt will be made in this chapter to propose a social evolution process of the African-American and Dalits. The research will put forth the social evolution theory in the present chapter. This chapter will discuss various interpretations on social evolutions of Dalits and African-American communities. Various views and comments will be offered in this chapter and discussed critically. It forms a very important part of the research to analyze the human evolution theory and compare it with the social evolution of Dalit and African-American communities for the present study's outcome. The chapter ends with the detail information about the Human Evolution Theory and social evolution process of the selected communities.

3. Chapter III: Social Evolution in the autobiography *Up from Slavery*

This chapter will state the background of the selected autobiography from African-American literature. It will also deal with the African-American people's struggle from slavery to self-made human. An attempt will be made in this chapter to discuss and analyze autobiography *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington from the social evolution perspective. His personal, social and

cultural life will be studied in detail in this chapter. His pathetic experiences during her upbringings will also be discussed and analyzed from social evolution perspective. The social evolution stages will be applied to the selected autobiography to justify that the African-American community had to passes through the social evolution stages as the entire human beings have undergone the human evolution stages. Throughout the chapter an attempt will be made to explain that the social evolution journey of African-American people is as equal to the human evolution theory.

4. Chapter IV: Social Evolution in the autobiography *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings*

This chapter will state the background of the selected autobiography from African-American literature. It will also deal with the African-American woman's struggle from slavery to self-made human. An attempt will be made in this chapter to discuss and analyze autobiography *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings* Maya Angelou from the social evolution perspective. Her personal, social and cultural life will be studied in detail in this chapter. Her pathetic experiences during her upbringings will also be discussed and analyzed from social evolution perspective. The social evolution stages will be applied to the selected autobiography to justify that the African-American woman had to passes through the social evolution. Throughout the chapter an attempt will be made to explain that the social evolution journey of African-American woman is as equal to the human evolution theory.

5. Chapter V: Social Evolution in the autobiography *The Outcaste*

The present chapter deals with the background of selected autobiography from Indian Dalit literature. It also deals with the struggle of the Indian Dalit people from slavery to self-made human. An attempt will be made in this chapter to discuss and analyze Dalit autobiography *The Outcaste* by Sharankumar Limbale from the social evolution perspective. His pathetic experiences during their life will also be discussed and analyzed from social evolution perspective. The social evolution stages will be applied to the selected autobiography to justify that Dalit community had gone through the social evolution stages to achieve an identity as a self-made human in the Indian society.

6. Chapter VI: Social Evolution in the autobiography *The Weave of My Life*

The present chapter deals with the background of selected autobiography from the Indian Dalit literature. It also deals with the struggle of the Indian Dalit women from slavery to self-made human. An attempt will be made in this chapter to discuss and analyze the selected autobiography *The Weave of My Life* by Urmila Pawar from the social evolution perspective. Her pitiful experiences during her entire life will also be discussed and analyzed from social evolution perspective. The social evolution stages will be applied to the selected autobiography to justify that Dalit woman had gone through the social evolution stages to achieve an identity as a self-made human in the Indian society.

7. Chapter VII: Conclusion

This chapter will be mainly devoted to the findings of the present research. It will offer bird's eye view on the preceding chapters and will provide literary significance of the present study. The definite conclusions will be drawn on the basis of the analysis of the selected autobiographies from Dalit literature and African-American literature. At the end of this section, the study will propose an additional scope for further research and include the academic and pedagogical implication of the present study.

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